

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 11 are in this application. Claim 1 has been amended to define that the distillation column that is used is a vacuum distillation column. Support for this amendment is found *inter alia* on page 4, lines 3-4 and lines 23-24.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 and 7-11 as being unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ireland et al. (US patent 4,041,097). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The invention is directed to obtaining a usable wax product from the bottom stream and/or at least one side stream and this is achieved by operating the distillation column so that there is substantially no thermal degradation.

Although the Examiner admits that Ireland does not disclose that the distillation column is operated at conditions (claimed pressures and temperatures) so that there is no thermal degradation of the feedstock or of the wax products, the Examiner believes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the conditions to those that do not produce thermal degradation. Operation at lower temperatures decreases, if not eliminates, thermal degradation (see page 4, lines 3-8) which causes an increase in the isomer and olefin content which may immediately render the wax product non-usable (see page 2, lines 31-33).

As previously indicated, there is no suggestion in Ireland to operate its distillation column so that there is no thermal degradation of the feedstock.

Ireland is directed to improving the yield of distillate fuel oil and octane upgrading gasoline product (see column 2, lines 35-42). It is well known that an increase in the isomer content is required to increase the octane number of a gasoline product. As stated on page 2, lines 30-33, thermal degradation, even in its mildest form of less than 2%, will cause an increase in isomer

and olefin content. Consequently, given that Ireland is attempting to increase the overall isomer content it is not concerned with minimizing thermal degradation and therefore, a person skilled in the art, upon consideration of Ireland, would not be motivated to operate the column as in the present invention.

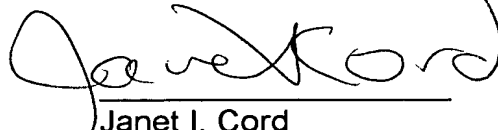
Therefore, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner has rejected claim 6 as being obvious in view of Ireland and Farnham. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Since claim 1 is not obvious over Ireland, claim 6 cannot be obvious over the combination of Ireland and Farnham, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

On the basis of the foregoing remarks favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet I. Cord", written over a horizontal line.

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